

Greenfield Triathlon hits 30 years

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Greenfield Triathlon

The Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon will celebrate its 30th year of racing on Sunday morning.

More than 200 athletes are slated to take part in the 30th running of the competition, which takes place on the first Sunday of August and has become a staple in Greenfield after three decades of racing.

"We're very excited for the 30th year," Greenfield Recreation Department director Christy Moore said. "The triathlon committee is very dedicated and we've had some people helping with this event from the very beginning."

That includes Chris Ethier, who owns Bicycle World in Greenfield, and was the triathlon's original creator. The Greenfield Recreation Department now uses the event to raise an average of \$10,000 for the department. Rick Roy, a professional photographer in town, has also been around since the race's beginning and will again be on hand Sunday morning to hand out trophies during the award presentations, which take place immediately following the race.

The event will kick off at 8

a.m. when the first swimming heat hits the Green River waters, beginning at the dam and heading Northwest up the river. The first swimmers will be from the International Competition, and after those athletes get started, the swimmers from the Sprint Competition will get underway.

The International Competition is the longer of the two events, starting with a .63-mile swim and continuing with a 21.76-mile bike ride before concluding with a 6.51-mile run. The Sprint Competition — which generally has more entrants — is roughly half the size, beginning with a .31-mile swim, continuing with a 14.87-mile bike, and ending with a 3.07-mile run.

Unfortunately, for the second straight season the triathlon course had to be altered due to the lingering damage caused by Hurricane Irene in the fall of 2011, which destroyed the historic covered bridge on Eunice Williams Drive. In the past, bikers would do laps across the bridge, something that had become one of the most memorable experiences for competitors. But with no bridge to cross, race officials had to come



Recorder/Peter MacDonald

Dan Benson cycles during last year's Sprint competition of the Greenfield Triathlon. Benson won the overall title.

up with an alternate bike route. Now, when bikers head up Nash's Mill Road and take a left onto Leyden Road, they will head out on Leyden and take a right onto Barton Road. The course then bangs a right onto Country Club Road, where bikers will head to the end and take a right onto Silver Street. Riders will turn right, back onto Leyden Road, and

depending on which competition they are in, will make either two (Sprint) or three (International) loops before finally making their way back down Nash's Mill Road to the transition area.

The final part of the event is the run, which will head back up toward the original route. Runners will go west on Nash's
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Mill Road and up the small hill before taking a right on Colrain Road. Competitors will turn right at the fork in the road and head out on Plain Road. International runners will head all the way up toward Eunice Williams Drive, where they will turn around and run back, while Sprint runners will take a left onto Meadow Lane and head back toward the swimming area and the finish line.

Last year's Sprint winner was Greenfield's own Dan Benson, who conquered the course in 57 minutes, 24 seconds, while Shelburne Falls' Gregory Shea came in second at 58:50. Belchertown's Jill Herrick won the Women's Division in 1:07.20. The International Competition was captured by Mukunda Feldman from Easthampton in a time of 1:38.11, while Amesbury's Shaina Damm won the Women's International Competition in 1:45.14.

And in spite being around

for 30 years, race organizers are still trying to improve the event and this year the committee has hired a new timing company, which will use ChronoTrack technology. Competitors will have the ability to send updates to Facebook pages at each transition checkpoint. The race also has a new logo and new website in its 30th season at www.greenfield-triathlon.com. Spectators can watch the event free of charge but anyone parking in the lot at the swimming area, must arrive early and will not be permitted to leave until after the event (around noon). Spectators are encouraged to park around North Parish School and Valley Medical Group on Conway Street and walk down the hill to the swimming area.

As always, Nash's Mill Road will be closed from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. and motorists are asked to take extra caution when traveling on any of the roads used by the race that are not closed.